

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A fiber drawing method of heating and drawing an optical fiber preform by making use of a drawing furnace comprising a muffle tube into which said optical fiber preform is supplied,

wherein said optical fiber preform is drawn in a state in which a temperature of said muffle tube is kept below 1800°C.

2. (Original) The fiber drawing method according to Claim 1, wherein said optical fiber preform is drawn, using as said drawing furnace a drawing furnace comprising a heater a length of a heating portion of which in a drawing direction is not less than eight times a diameter of said optical fiber preform.

3. (Currently Amended) A fiber drawing method according to Claim 1 ~~of heating and drawing an optical fiber preform by making use of a drawing furnace,~~

wherein said optical fiber preform is drawn so that in said drawing furnace a taper angle of a meniscus portion of said optical fiber preform becomes not more than 19°.

4. (Withdrawn) A fiber drawing apparatus comprising a drawing furnace for heating and drawing an optical fiber preform,

wherein said drawing furnace comprises:

a muffle tube into which said optical fiber preform is supplied; and

a heater disposed around an outer periphery of said muffle tube and arranged to heat a predetermined longitudinal range of said optical fiber preform, and

wherein a length of a heating portion of said heater in a drawing direction is not less than six times a diameter of an inner periphery of said muffle tube.

5. (Withdrawn) The fiber drawing apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein said heater includes a plurality of heaters arranged in series along the drawing direction, and

wherein the sum of lengths of heating portions of said plurality of heaters in said drawing direction is not less than six times the diameter of the inner periphery of said muffle tube.

6. (Withdrawn) The fiber drawing apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein said heater is a carbon heater.